

# European Regional Development Fund

The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) seeks to influence the economic challenges that are being encountered in order to meet address and help meet the ambitious targets and economic growth as stated in the Lisbon Agenda. The aim is to improve regional competitiveness across the EU by tackling the challenges facing regions as a whole, particularly with regard to the enterprise sector and its key sources of competitiveness as well as distinct local challengers. The ERDG is delivered in Aberdeenshire through the Lowlands and Uplands (LUPS) European Regional Development Programme 2007-2013.

The LUPS ERDF Programme

Programme Priorities

Priority 1 - Research and Innovation

Priority 2 - Enterprise Growth

Priority 4 - Rural Development

Further information

## The LUPS ERDF Programme

The overall vision of the LUPS ERDF Programme is to encourage the growth of the regions economy within a sustainable development framework and thereby enable all parts of the region to contribute to achieving the Lisbon Agenda goals. In order to achieve this, the Programme has identified the following eight challenges:

- 1) Increasing the regional benefits of a strong higher and further education sector.
- 2) Improving RTD and innovation across the region.
- 3) Increasing the numbers of people becoming entrepreneurs.
- 4) Addressing the development bottlenecks for new and growing businesses.
- 5) Improving the indigenous enterprise development of the most disadvantaged urban communities.
- 6) Improving the ability of disadvantaged urban communities to access economic growth in the areas of opportunity.
- 7) Increasing the diversification of the rural economy into new activities while supporting sustainable competitiveness of traditional industries.
- 8) Improving key support services to underpin the sustainability of rural economic development.

## Programme Priorities

There are four distinct Priorities within the LUPS ERDF Programme:

- 1) Research and Innovation
- 2) Enterprise Growth

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- 3) Urban Regeneration
- 4) Rural Development

Aberdeenshire is an eligible area for interventions through Priorities 1, 2, and 4. Projects in Aberdeenshire are ineligible to apply for funding under Priority 3 which is targeted on selected urban areas with deprivation issues.

**Priority 1 - Research and Innovation** aims to improve the competitiveness of the Lowlands & Uplands Scotland enterprise base through increased innovation and a fuller use of its RTD base. The following activities are eligible:

- Support for small-scale research infrastructure in research centres of expertise
- Technology transfer programmes for individual enterprises and research centres
- Support to enterprises and individuals for converting research ideas into potential products, services and process improvements
- Scoping studies and prototype development for individual enterprises
- Projects aiming to increase demand in individual enterprises for research and innovation and adapt business processes that encourage more internal innovation practices
- Investments in individual enterprise capacity to develop full product development and market research
- Creation of collaborative research projects that address RTD bottleneck gaps, in particular in the potential growth sectors
- Pilot projects that test out new approaches to encouraging innovation with mainstreaming activity
- Projects that encourage enterprises with limited experience in working with research partners to develop collaboration
- Promotion of new sustainable Research and Technological Development (RTD) and supply networks, particularly for local SMEs (Small and Medium Sized Enterprises), that transfer key research and innovation knowledge.

**Priority 2 - Enterprise Growth** aims to improve enterprise formation & growth rates by enhancing the enterprise support environment, particularly with regards to access to finance, entrepreneurship, e-commerce & resource efficiency. The following activities are eligible:

- Investor readiness programmes
- Support for risk capital funding for the region as a whole, where such schemes can demonstrate market gaps and build on the experience of past schemes
- Investment funding for early stage and start-up of new businesses
- Targeted services for sign-posting enterprises to potential funding services

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- Initiatives that raise the capacity, skills and readiness of enterprises to assess their funding needs, managing new funding and general investor readiness
- Addressing gaps in pre- and post-start up provision of advice
- Promotional events for would-be entrepreneurs, particularly in more remote or deprived parts of the region,
- Projects that promote start-ups from groups with relatively low rates of entrepreneurship, such as ethnic minorities and women
- Projects that encourage the greater conversion of would-be entrepreneurs to start-ups
- Projects that encourage the take-up of e-business among enterprises
- Support for the development of e-commerce strategies by enterprises
- Development and implementation of environmental and carbon-use/footprinting audits by enterprises
- Introduction of more environmentally-sustainable production systems and business processes, including more efficient use of resources and energy
- Small-scale adaptation of businesses to renewable energy technologies.

**Priority 4 - Rural Development** aims to maximise the contribution of rural areas to achieving Lisbon goals with a view to developing sustainable economic growth. The following activities are eligible:

- Support for sector-wide marketing initiatives to promote diversification in traditional industries in the region, particularly through identification of new market opportunities including niche and exporting strategies
- Support for small and medium sized enterprises and for groups of micro, small and medium sized enterprises in developing new sources of supply and production processes
- Support for refurbishment and enhancement of business centres and childcare facilities and training/learning centres
- Small-scale support for ICT investments enabling distance learning and higher and further education outreach in remote communities
- Small-scale businesses site development (especially those that employ 'green design' principles, such as use of renewable energy, resource/energy efficiency and the encouragement of low/zero carbon use)
- Development of educational access strategies for rural areas including scoping studies (but not support for infrastructure development)
- Support for initiatives that link enterprises with training and educational services of higher/further education bodies
- Start-up support for the development and initial implementation of community transport initiatives (but not the purchase and running of the vehicles)
- Piloting of emission-reducing and clean-energy vehicle and transport systems (although again, mobile assets themselves would not be eligible)

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## Further Information

For further information on the European Regional Development Fund in Aberdeenshire please contact:

[European Services Executive](#)

01224 665 225

Further information on the European Regional Development Fund in Aberdeenshire is available from the following external websites:

The [EU ERDF webpage](#)

The [Scottish Government Structural Funds website](#)

The [ESEP website](#) (programme administrator)



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